

Post 82766

McNamara Sees Corps Unaffected

Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara has emphatically denied that the military's plan to salvage rejects could put the Job Corps out of business.

Rather, McNamara argued, there is little duplication either in training or the youth clientele served by the two programs.

"I think it would be a grave error if the announcement of the new Defense Department plan were to result in any reduction in the Administration's request for support of the Job Corps," the Defense Secretary has written to Sen. Joseph S. Clark (D-Pa.).

Fears Expressed

Some Job Corps officials have privately expressed fears that critics will use the military's plan for a renewed attack on their program. Anti-Poverty Chief Sargent Shriver predicted last week that cries will be raised that the "Job Corps is no longer needed because the Army can do a better job with the same youngsters."

In his letter to Clark, the Defense Secretary made it clear that he agrees with Shriver that the two programs can operate without competi-

tion because they have different aims and customers.

The Defense Department will take 40,000 draft rejects and substandard volunteers and give them special training to upgrade them to military standards within the next 10 months. Then the project would be geared to handle 100,000 a year.

Cites Differences

McNamara noted there are many men with educational deficiencies so severe that the armed forces cannot count on upgrading them even with improved training procedures. Here, he emphasized, is where the Job Corps can make a contribution—and it does send over a quarter of its graduates into military service.

He also emphasized these differences between the two programs:

- The Job Corps enrolls youths from 16 to 21 while the minimum draft age is 19. Three-quarters of the Job Corps enrollees are under draft age.

- The average reading ability of the recent Job Corps enrollees is reported at fourth-grade level. The new military program requires a minimum of a fifth-grade education achievement.